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ABSTRACT

Education decentralization efforts are examined in six primarily rural, sub-Saharan African countries--Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Stated reasons do not always reflect the real underlying rationales for decentralization. Education decentralization that is publicly advocated to improve service delivery and local empowerment may actually be motivated by cost reduction or increasing political control. There is much discrepancy between the claims and practices of education decentralization. Core education decisions around curriculum, day-to-day school management, and organizational issues are hardly ever decentralized so as to encourage local community participation in decision making. Macro-level economic and political contexts influence the implementation and outcomes of decentralization. Devolution of authority to local communities cannot succeed unless all stakeholders internalize the objectives, benefits, and responsibilities involved. Decentralization reforms that change the distribution of power, authority, and resources meet greater resistance than those that reassign administrative responsibilities alone. Devolution of power to lower levels of government or local communities may be more rhetoric than reality. Appropriate organizational structure, technical capacity, and resources to implement decentralization policies are necessary, as are political will and congruency between "bottom-up" and "top-down" principles. (Contains 137 references.) (TD)

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Education Decentralization in Sub-Saharan Africa – Espoused Theories and Theories in Use[1]

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Abstract

This paper synthesizes information on education decentralization in six Sub-Saharan African countries, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe[2] in terms of government structures, processes, and policies. The review focuses on central government plans to redistribute certain functions and/or powers in education systems. The paper is organized as follows: The first part of the paper briefly discusses and clarifies the concept of decentralization, and includes a review of the rationales for educational decentralization. The next section provides the Sub-Saharan scenario of decentralization in terms of the background of the selected countries and current trends in policies and practices of decentralization. The third section presents a framework for a description of the nature of educational decentralization and a profile of each country; and, the last section analyzes education decentralization in order to provide some understanding of the multiple interpretations of decentralization.

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[1] This is a shortened version of the Qualifying Paper submitted in fulfillment of part of the ED.D requirement at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

[2] While the review reflects on the process of education decentralization broadly in most cases it focuses on one or two specific decentralization initiatives that have been implemented in the past decade. Empirical studies focusing on outcomes of the educational decentralization in these countries are very limited so many of the conclusions are preliminary and cautious.

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Introduction

The last decade has witnessed a proliferation of decentralization and local government reforms around the world. Of 75 developing and transitional countries with populations of more than 5 million, all but 12 have engaged in some form of transfer of power to sub-national or local government level (Ebel, 2000). However, the actual manifestation of the process of decentralization including the rationales or the operational features, vary somewhat across different countries. The wave of decentralization initiatives may be motivated by the advent of multi-party systems in Africa, deepening democratization in Latin America, challenges of ethnic and regional diversity in Asia, and a perceived failure of central governments to effectively deliver services (Litvack, Ahmad and Bird, 1998). Education, in particular, which has been subjected to innumerable reforms, has been fertile ground for decentralization efforts. Changes in the relationship among economy (with calls to reduce public investment and increase privatization), politics (with support for deregulation and limiting the welfare role of the state), and education (with a push for local accountability and standardization) have begun to challenge previous notions about the role and structure of education (Torres, 2000). A central challenge revolves around attempts to dismantle centralized education bureaucracies and create devolved systems entailing varying levels of autonomy (Whitty, Power, & Halpin, 1998).

During the past decades more than twenty-five Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries have implemented one or more major decentralization initiatives. Decentralization efforts in the region have had different priorities, contexts, and levels of resources to support implementation, yet there have also been common characteristics and challenges. Although these countries are extremely diverse, they have a broad common denominator, poverty and fragile democratic institutions. Furthermore, a common central assumption that appears to dominate the decentralization drive in these countries is that decentralization will improve the ability of their governments to promote development (Street, 1985). However, in almost all cases there has also been a substantial gap between proclaimed policies and implementation (Admolekun, 1991). Not only is there a gap between intentions and actions, often educational decentralization has been motivated by reasons other than purely educational motivations.

In reviewing education decentralization attempts one may identify these other motivations by focusing on the "theory of action" or maps that guide actions. At the same time, it is necessary to distinguish between those theories that are explicit or espoused, and those that are implicit or theories-in-use (Argyris and Schon 1974). Weiss (1995) suggests that there are a number of explicit or implicit "theories of change" that inform social programs, and that all policies are theories, for policies say: If we do A, then B (the desired outcomes) will occur. Accordingly it may be possible to identify theories of action or change on which decentralization policies and initiatives are based. To better understand the theories informing decentralization efforts, we need to examine the underlying assumptions (or rationales) on which they were based, how the programs were carried out (mechanisms and processes) and outcomes. While it is challenging, if not impossible, to spell out theories of change that apply across programs because they may differ in emphasis, managerial structure, and priorities (Weiss 1995), it is possible to identify certain implicit basic assumptions and hypotheses that underlie the larger endeavor. Particular doctrines and assumptions develop about whether administrative or political responsibility should be decentralized, and on consequences that follow (Elmore, 1993).

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Defining Decentralization

Decentralization is a highly ambiguous concept that has been variously defined and interpreted (Govinda, 1997; Litvack et al, 1998; Maclean and Lauglo, 1985; Manor 1999; Patrinos and Ariasingham, 1998; Rondinelli, 1981; Sayed, 1997; Weiler, 1989; Welsh and McGinn 1999). There are also perplexing differences in its implementation, with decentralization and centralization often occurring simultaneously; and often not implemented as an independent sectoral policy but embedded in larger state reforms[3]. Furthermore, it is often implemented haphazardly, and decision-makers don't always control the pace or genesis of the process (World Bank 1999, 107).

While decentralization covers a broad range of concepts and each type has different characteristics, policy implications, and conditions for success, a basic conception common to most definitions is that decentralization is a transfer of some form of authority from the center to the local level. Accordingly, it may be defined in terms of the form (functional activities) and level (national to sub-national) as well as the nature or degree of power that is transferred. Administrative, Fiscal, Market and Political dimensions capture the form (functional activities) and level (e.g. national to sub-national and local) of decentralization while devolution, deconcentration, and delegation refer to the nature and degree of power being transferred.

Figure One: Dimensions of Decentralization

Form		Degree of Power	
Overlapping Functional Activities ↕	*Market*	**Devolution**	Continuum from Highest to Lowest ↕
	Political		
	Fiscal	**Delegation**	
	Administrative	**Deconcentration**	

Autonomy may range from the lowest (as in deconcentration where there is no independent authority from the center which happens more in the context of administrative decentralization), to the middle (as in delegation where there may be some independent authority which occurs more in the context of fiscal decentralization) to the highest level (devolution as in where there may, in theory at least, be completely independent decision-making authority from the center which occurs more in political and market decentralization) (Rondinelli and Cheema, 1983; Rondinelli, 1998; Govinda, 1997). These dimensions are inextricably linked, and more often than not occur simultaneously (Manor, 1997 and 1999).

Educational decentralization is often a manifestation of wider administrative and political decentralization. It is a complex process that can result in major changes in the way school systems are organized, make policy, generate revenues and spend funds, manage schools, develop and deliver the curriculum among other functions (Fiske, 1996). It often involves an explicit challenge to the role of the state in education, precipitating dynamic tensions in different contexts (Lauglo and McClean, 1985). Educational decentralization may range from moderate, where the center turns authority for delivery of education to local governments, to radical decentralization in which the center turns authority for delivery of education to local schools

[3] This was a key finding of a study by Juan Prawda (1992) of a selection of Latin American countries.

(Cummings and Riddell 1992). McClean and King (1999) interpret the transfer of "authority" as a transfer of decision-making powers from central ministries of education to intermediate governments, local governments, communities, and schools. The extent of the transfer may range from administrative deconcentration to a broader transfer of financial control to regional or local levels.

From an economic conceptualization of decentralization, linked to "marketization" and pressures for privatization of education, educational decentralization involves greater participation in the financing and governance of education, and in decision-making (Patrinos and Ariasingham, 1998). It involves the creation of a consumer or client driven market in which schools compete for students by trying to offer the best services and greater choice, and decisions about schooling are decentralized to the individual, who is *theoretically* free to choose in an exchange process for schooling as a service (Bullock and Thomas, 1997). This perspective challenges the dominant public system in most countries and calls for a wholly different system of education built around school autonomy and parent and student choice rather than direct democratic control (Chubb and Moe, 1990).

In this review education decentralization is defined in terms of shifts in authority, noting that decentralization is about shifts in the location of those who govern, about transfers of authority from one location or level of educational organization, to another. These shifts of authority may occur across four levels: central government; provincial, state or regional governing bodies; municipal, county or district governments; and, schools (Welsh and McGinn 1999). The shifts in authority relate to different administrative, fiscal, and political functional activities and their effect on governance, school organization, management and financing decisions.

Motives for Decentralization

While the motives for decentralization are numerous, disparate, and often, contradictory, most decentralization efforts are motivated by political and fiscal considerations (Ford, 1999). Changes in administrative organization although quite variable, are rarely neutral - they advance the interests of some groups over others, alter patterns of resource allocation, change the distribution of income and wealth, and increase or restrict citizens access to policy-makers and decision-making (Rondinelli and Cheema, 1983). Motives include increasing efficiency and accountability, increasing democratization and community participation, limiting the power of some groups, becoming more responsive to local needs, mobilizing resources, and devolving financial responsibility (McGinn and Welsh, 1999). In some countries it may be a political strategy of ruling elites to retain most of their power by relinquishing some of it (Prud'homme 1994). For example, leaders of some regimes particularly in Asia and Africa, view decentralization as a substitute for democratization at the national level, and a safe way to acquire legitimacy and grass roots support (Crook and Manor, 1998).

The major general arguments supporting decentralization in developing countries may be grouped under two broad categories: economic with a focus on increasing resources, efficiency, and relevance; and, political with a focus on increasing democratic participation, equity, and stability. The economic rationale is that decentralization is necessary to accelerate the pace and spread the benefits of growth, integrate diverse regions in heterogeneous countries, and use scarce resources more efficiently. The other suggests that decentralization brings government closer to the people allowing poorer groups to get a bigger share of government services, and involving beneficiaries in planning and decision-making at the local level (Rondinelli, 1981).

This rationale also assumes that decentralization may diffuse conflict, and ensure political stability by providing layers of insulation between the center and the rest of the system

Figure 2: Typology of Rationales or Motives for Decentralization[4]

Economic	Political
Increase Resources May generate increased resources at the local level to ensure more services. People are willing to pay for services if they respond to needs and especially if they are involved in decision-making	**Increase or Strengthen Democratization** Limits the over-concentration of power, authority, and resources at the center
Promote Efficiency Relieves top management of routine tasks that can be performed by field staff and local officials Eliminates red-tape and overcomes overly-structured bureaucratic procedures and constraints of centralized systems Decreasing diseconomies of scale, decentralization can increase the number of public goods and services, and the efficiency at which they are delivered. Improves the competitiveness of government and enhances innovation enabling governments to satisfy the wishes of its citizens	**Promote Equity** Representation for political, religious, ethnic and tribal groups in decision-making leads to greater equity in allocation of resources Creating alternative decentralized decision-making structures and processes may offset the influence of entrenched local elites, who may be unsympathetic to national policies or insensitive to the needs of disadvantaged local groups Regional and local level officials are able to develop and implement programs suited to the needs of heterogeneous regions and groups thus addressing equity concerns
Ensure Relevance Decisions about public expenditure made at the local level are more responsive to local needs and more likely to reflect local demands Overcomes limitations of central planning by delegating greater authority to officials in the field and closer to problems Increases knowledge of and sensitivity to local needs making for more realistic and effective programs	**Ensure Stability** Allows for better penetration of national policies to remote areas of the country where it may be ignored or undermined Increases political stability and national unity by giving groups in different regions the means to participate in decision-making Facilitates the exchange of information about local needs and channel political demands from local communities to central ministries

The economic rationale justifies decentralization on the basis of allocative efficiency and productive efficiency aimed at improving public service delivery. Allocative efficiency involves better matching of public services to local preferences; and, productive efficiency involves increased accountability, fewer levels of bureaucracy, and better knowledge of local costs (World Bank, 2001). The political category relates to considerations of local participation, good governance, and democratization. The participation rationale developed as a consequence of changed approaches to development. It hoped to make people central to development by ensuring involvement in interventions that affected them (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). It is also seen as a means to ensure political stability where there are deep divisions along ethnic or regional lines, as in South Africa or Uganda (World Development Report, 2000). A basic assumption behind the political rationale is that there is a positive casual relationship between

[4] While reviewing a variety rationales in developing this typology, the primary sources were Ford (1999), Rondinelli, (1981and 1999), and Rondinelli and Cheema, 1983.

democratization and decentralization, the expectation being decentralization brings about the devolution of meaningful authority to local bodies that are accountable and accessible to their citizens, who enjoy full rights and political liberty (Blair, 1997). However, simply creating decentralized structures or new procedures for participation in planning and administration, do not guarantee that they will be effective or that they will generate greater economic growth, or greater social equity; neither does it necessarily imply greater democracy or a change in political and social power relationships.

Many of the ideological and political imperatives associated with education decentralization relate to the rhetoric of devolution, parent and community participation and school-based decision-making. Administrative rationales are concerned with the most efficient means of achieving particular educational goals; political rationales are aimed at maintaining or extending political power; and, ideological rationales are based on beliefs that greater local autonomy is inseparable from aims related to particular views of the nature of individuals, society, and knowledge. The efficiency rationale suggests that local decision-making in education will alleviate problems of access to schooling, wastage, and mismanagement (Prawda, 1993). However, experience in many developing contexts reveals a tacit assumption made by most central policy makers involved in formulating and implementing large scale educational reforms: a universally applied remedy is received by local schools in uniform ways; and, by lifting the heavy hand of central regulation and bureaucratic control, a thousand (organizational) flowers will bloom and school actors will assume wise leadership with complete information (Fuller and Rivarola, 1998). This, of course, rarely transpires –internal dynamics and institutionalized features of environments or sectors condition their evolution and impact. The exogenous force of a school's prior history, surrounding economic conditions, and its coherent (or chaotic) management structure, all affect the implementation of decentralization reforms. Whatever the specific context of decentralization, contests over *political authority and power*, the role and interests of local actors, as well as *institutionalized organizational routines* and taken-for-granted or *cultural* assumptions regarding authority, expertise, and participation have an impact.

In general rationales for education decentralization are based on essential assumptions, which reflect a "curious combination of strong preconceived beliefs and limited empirical evidence" (Litvack et al, 1998). Given the nature of the assumptions informing rationales for decentralization, government plans to redistribute power and influence in education systems in developing and developed countries have been fraught with controversy and contradictions. This may be due in no small part to the fact that such plans have involved a disparate mix of aspects as: moving certain responsibilities nearer the school and classroom, strengthening some decision-making arenas and weakening others, empowering parents and communities and curbing professionals' control, and inserting the style and substance of modern business and financial management (Arnott and Raab, 2000).

Decentralization of Education: The Sub-Saharan Scenario

Decentralization is being discussed and attempted throughout Africa, often as a panacea to solve broader political, social or economic problems (SARA, 1997). Central governments are decentralizing fiscal, political, and administrative responsibilities to lower-levels of government, local institutions, and the private sector. Despite immense support for decentralization policies in many African countries, especially among donor agencies such as the World Bank, UNESCO and other bi-lateral and multilateral agencies, there is on-going debates about the degree of

control central governments can and should have over planning and administration (Sazanami, 1983). Compared to other regions of the world, Africa has the weakest formal local government structures, judged by size of expenditures and employees. Yet, diverse attempts have been made to decentralize state structures since the colonial period. In the 1960's a number of decentralization initiatives were designed to bring "government closer to people", to tap the contributions and resources of local communities, and to allow them to participate in national development (Crook and Manor, 1998). The economic crisis of the 1970s, followed by structural adjustment and political reforms in the 1980s and 1990s led to new initiatives designed to improve state systems that were widely regarded to have failed or collapsed (Olowu, 2001).

Most African countries (and all six of these SSA countries) have started to transfer power, resources, and responsibilities to sub-national governments and/or to other actors. The pace of decentralization across the countries is quite uneven. Some, for example Uganda, is proceeding fast, while others like Ghana, and Zimbabwe are under way but more slowly. Tanzania and Mali having just started, and Nigeria, which has restarted the process of creating new local units and transferring responsibilities, are at the other end of the continuum. The decentralization process encompasses different institutional solutions to internal and external political pressures (Brosio, 2000). In education specifically, there is slow (but sure) progress toward decentralization of the provision, decision-making powers and control of education services in the SSA region (ADEA, 1999).

Decentralization policies and programs that most SSA countries have embarked upon in the past decade are different from previous efforts in two main respects. First, their primary objective is to empower the people as a part of efforts aimed at democratizing state institutions and initiate/support local self-governing structures, not the extension of state control. Second, there is a growing appreciation of the need to develop not local government as such but local governance, focusing on processes rather than structures alone. This implies not only the vertical transfer of responsibilities and resources from central to local governments (the conventional conception of democratic or devolutionary decentralization) but also the development of horizontal networks between local governments and local non-state actors such as the private sector, civil society, and international organizations (Olowu, 2001). A decentralization motive that appears to be specific to African countries is that local government may be a major vehicle for specific poverty alleviation policies, such as the distribution of basic food to the poorest segments of the population or the implementation of growth-inducing policies (e.g. expansion of education services), through the mobilization of local resources and increased participation. This view suggests that responsibility for policies be assigned to small local governments, or to local communities to avoid the risk where democratic institutions are fragile, of capture by vested interests. However, the greater effectiveness with regards to such policies of a decentralized and democratic delivery mechanism over a centralized, but equally democratic, government is not granted. Also there is not necessarily a causality nexus between these two processes; conditions may have improved as a result of the re-introduction of democracy and not as an effect of decentralization (Brosio, 2000).

Decentralization of social services, including education appears to be embedded in the larger decentralization processes that are occurring in the region. In almost all the countries the introduction or reintroduction of decentralized systems are accompanied by popular elections for local councils as part of the general trend of the introduction of or return to democratization. For a summary of the decentralization process in these six countries, see *Appendix One*.

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Country Profiles: Status of Education Decentralization[7]

A framework (*Table one* below) focusing on context, purposes and form of implementation was used to review and analyze a variety of documents relating to decentralization in these countries and develop a profile of each country's education decentralization efforts.

Figure Three: Framework for Analyzing Education Decentralization Experiences

Category for Analysis	*Content*
Environment and Context	National context including economic, political, and social influences
Rationale	Motives and reasons for educational decentralization
Form of Decentralization	Organization structure and design to support the process
Level of Implementation	Level (provincial/state, local/district, school) and function (administrative, political, fiscal, economic)
Stage and Outcomes of Implementation	Progress with implementation

Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe represent a wide spectrum in terms of physical features, natural resources, and socio-cultural characteristics[5]. There are variations in population size and geographical expanse, economic level, and education attainment of the six countries. However, there are also some commonalities in terms of their similar colonial legacies (all except Mali were British colonies), and economic status. All are extremely poor and have suffered varying degrees of economic and political turmoil since independence. For a summary of the status of education decentralization in the six countries see *Appendix Two*.

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[7] See Table 3 for a status of decentralization in each country.
[5] See Appendix One - Country Overview: Population, Income and Education

Figure Four Status of Education Decentralization in Selected Sub-Saharan African Countries

Country	Program	Theory in Action - Espoused	Theory in Action - In use	Mechanisms/ Processes	Outcomes
Ghana	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE)	Decentralization to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and management efficiency of the education sector by moving decisions closer to the level of the school	Cost reduction directed at decreasing the financial burden by increasing parental and community role in funding	District Education Offices (DEOs) responsible for school management, supervision, budgeting	Transfer of educational costs to sub-national units PTAs involved in fund raising at school and community level
Mali	Decade of Development in Education	A more equitable regional distribution of resources Improve management capacity Enhance local participation in the decision-making process Increase number of schools and improving the quality of teaching	Reducing national budgets Mobilizing regional and district - specific resources for development	Communes, circles, and regions responsible for administration of education Local associations formed	Transferring educational costs to sub-national units Greater political contestation - struggle between Parent-Student Associations and new school management groups Bureaucratic resistance
Nigeria	Universal Basic Education (UBE) and Nigeria Primary Education Project	Establishing democratic roots Increase political autonomy of state and local authorities Increase local participation Means to fight corruption Promote social equity	Mobilizing private resources - Community involvement in the management and provision of services encouraged through support in personnel, cost recovery and, private contributions	State Primary Education Boards (SPEBs) responsible for administration	Federal ministry of education to take charge of universal basic education(UBE) Some PTAs, school committees, community-based organizations (CBOs) involvement primary schools
Tanzania	Local Government Reform Agenda and Basic Education Master Plan (BEMP)	Planning and control at a local level facilitates an understanding of local problems Reduce red tape and bureaucracy	Cut costs and reduce central government's financial burden	Transfer of planning, management and resource allocation to regions and districts - Regional and District Education Offices Local school committees to oversee school administration	Central government sets national education policy, funds teachers and provide curricular materials Regional and District Education Officers administer and implement national policy Local government provides physical facilities Parents and communities provide additional learner materials, and support facilities
Uganda	Local Government Act of 1997 and Universal Primary Education	Improve accountability Redistribution of powers	Targeting national economic development Efficiency	District Councils administer schools Central government funding for schools channeled through the District Administration	Strongly centralized districts with direct link to the central administration. Planning and budgeting processes intensify the top-down character of the system
Zimbabwe	Urban Councils Act - Sectoral Decentralization to Local Authorities	Education provision is a partnership between government and local communities Increase efficiency through better utilization of resources	Strengthening policy control at the national level Increase local communities financing of education provision Cost Recovery Shed central responsibilities and field staff	Regional and District Education Offices responsible for administration Delegation of certain functions to School Development Committees (SDCs)	Greater community involvement in control and running of primary schools Confusion over the role of the SDC Center still makes most decisions and controls financial resources

Ghana

Since independence from British rule in 1957 Ghana has had seven political regimes, three military and four democratically elected. Ghana's population of about 19,894,014 (July 2001 estimate) comprises approximately one hundred different ethnic groups. Total school enrollment is 70%, but is lower in four of the country's ten regions (World Factbook, 2001).

Figure Five: Status of Education Decentralization in Ghana

Environment and Context	*Rationale*	*Form of Decentralization*	*Outcomes*
Historical tradition of decentralization & centralization in first 30 years of independence On-going decentralization since 1988	Shift locus of decision-making to local level to democratize state institutions Cost reduction Efficient use and allocation of resources	Regions (10) coordinate districts (110) District Assembly Common Fund Property, fuel and minor taxes, and fees at local level Districts responsible for urban services, primary education, and health	Deconcentration of administrative authority with little decentralization of institutional decision-making authority Ministries continue to operate in a centralized way

There are four levels in the education structure: central government, regional, district, and circuit. Each region is responsible for implementing policy set by the central Ministry of Education (MoE). The regions are divided into 110 District Education Offices (DEOs) run by assistant directors who report to regional offices. DEOs are responsible for school management, supervision, budgeting, and data collection and analysis for schools in their respective districts. The Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) program, introduced in 1992, was aimed at improving upon the 1987 reform by addressing the shortcomings identified in the implementation process. Key objectives for the FCUBE program are improving the quality of teaching and learning, the management efficiency of the education sector, and access and participation in basic education. When FCUBE was revised in 1997, decentralization and sustainability of management structures was reemphasized (Agyemang et al, 2000).

Implementation of decentralization policies in Ghana is an on-going process of decision-making involving many actors, the outcome of which is affected by the content of decentralization policies and the interaction of those concerned with them (Ayee, 1994). The role of key actors was a significant constraint on implementation of decentralization in Ghana; in the early stages, central officials had a restrictive and negative influence on the operations of local authorities (Ayee, 1994; Nkrumah, 1989). Other constraints include a lack of capacity, insufficient financial resources, paucity of infrastructure, and a lack of political will. Furthermore, the lack of skill at the periphery was not addressed nor has the expected transfer of talents from the center taken place (Dei, 1991). Despite tardiness in implementing

decentralization and critical problems relating to a lack of agreement on the nature of decentralization, there have been some positive outcomes. According to Ayee and Tay (1998) decentralization in Ghana has: enabled local people to show an interest in their own affairs and participate, even if minimally, in policies and program in their areas; increased access of people living in previously neglected rural areas to central government resources and institutions; created more opportunities for young people who aspired to a career in politics; involved DAs in the functional literacy program; and, ensured that environmental issues are addressed at a local level thus keeping a check on environmental degradation. Many of the expectations of decentralization of the education sector remain unfilled. Agyemang et al (2000), in reviewing a number of studies, found that a lack of clear-cut roles of Ministry of Education (MOE) officials, a lack of requisite staff for critical positions in the MOE, and its monolithic nature contributed to management inefficiency. The quality of education was low, and lower still in rural schools. Poor quality was due to lack of textbooks, poor teaching, excessive loss of instructional time, overload in syllabuses, inappropriate approach to non-traditional subjects, poor supervision, and lack of motivation for teachers. While decentralization had little effect on regional disparities, they discovered that quality improved as the reform program progressed and communities began participating in the provision and maintenance of schools (Agyemang et al, 2000). However, it is not clear whether such gains are attributable to the decentralization efforts per se or to other quality improvements efforts.

The Ghanaian experience suggests that decentralization is not a "quick fix" for political, administrative and economic problems, nor does it automatically overcome shortages in skilled personnel; in fact, it creates greater demand for them. Decentralization does not guarantee that more resources will be generated at the local level. It may be more costly because it encourages more groups, communities and levels of administration to undertake development projects (Ayee and Tay, 1998).

Mali

Mali is a landlocked country in northwestern Africa, where roughly 80% of the workforce is engaged in agriculture. Mali is one of the poorest countries of the World, ranking166 out of 174 countries in the 1999 United Nations Human Development Index (UNDP). Social indicators are very low: 70 % of the population is below the poverty line, life expectancy at birth is 50 years, and population illiteracy is 68%. After 1960 the education system expanded greatly, with enrollment more than doubling from 9% in 1960 to 22% in 1970 (SARA, 1997). In subsequent decades it has grown considerably less, with net enrollment in 1997 at 28%, one of lowest in the world.

Mali's decentralization experience over the past five years has been mixed. There has been limited devolution of power reflecting a compromise between two contrasting pressures. On the one hand, are demands for more autonomy from the northern regions of Mali, and on the other hand, are the central government's fears of losing too much power and about the lack of capacity in the newly created units. The compromise is thus to devolve equal but fewer responsibilities nationwide (Brosio, 2000). According to a USAID impact evaluation Malians are increasingly aware of and interested in decentralization. The evaluation notes a number of promising developments including localities' innovative efforts to manage their own affairs, the growing involvement of community groups, and a remarkable degree of public awareness and understanding of the decentralization program (Lippman and Lewis, 1998). Problems that have

slowed the devolution of power include a lack of resources, bureaucratic resistance, land use issues, low capacity of local government, and the consultation and coordination between different levels of government (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations 2001).

Figure Six: Status of Education Decentralization in Mali

Environment and Context	*Rationale*	*Form of Decentralization*	*Outcomes*
Increasing social pressure for greater democratization	Increase political autonomy of state and local authorities Increase participation in local decision-making structures Means to fight corruption in government and provision of services Promote equity	Multi-layered system with regions (8), circles (46), and municipalities (701). Business and other minor taxes Circles and Regions responsible for infrastructure Municipalities in charge of urban services	Some devolution of power over administrative and political decisions New levels of government have provided a channel for local participation Tension between traditional authorities and members of regional and local government structures

Local education sector associations resulting from the decentralization process, appear to have a greater role, but they also represent an area for political contestation. How they will influence local government or whether it will address their needs and demands is bound to lead to tension. Charlick (2001) points out that already struggle is shaping up between old Parent-Student Associations and new school management groups. Differences center around resources as well as the very definition of school and educational policies local communes will support.

Nigeria

Nigeria Africa's most populous country with 110 million people, contributing to 47% of West Africa's population and 43% of its GDP [8] is undergoing profound political transformation. It possesses a wealth of natural resources - major oil and gas deposits, minerals, good agricultural land, and a well-developed industrial base. Yet socio-economic indicators are low - the Gross National Product (GNP) declined from $1,000 in 1980 to $260 in 1995, placing Nigeria among the 20 poorest nations in the world (UNDP, 1998). Nigeria's Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI) was 38% in 1980, while Kenya reported an index of 53% and Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire 41% (UNDP, 1996). There is much regional disparity within Nigeria: social indicators

[8] 1998 estimate – Source: World Bank.

are worse in the north than the south, and lower in rural than urban areas. Nigeria's education services expanded rapidly during the 1970s, but there has been serious deterioration in the quantity and quality of services in the past two decades (World Bank, Africa Region, 1995).

A key element of education reform initiatives is the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Program introduced with the assistance of the World Bank. Aims of the UBE Program include: improving the quality of education through the supply of instructional materials, upgrading of infra-structural facilities, enhancing teachers' competence, facilitating school management, inspection, planning and data gathering (World Bank, 1999). At the same time UBE is expected to identify and describe existing innovative approaches to improve performance in the delivery of social services through community participation, targeting, client involvement, and fiscal decentralization.

Figure 7: Status of Education Decentralization in Nigeria

Environment and Context	*Rationale*	*Form of Decentralization*	*Outcomes*
Previous military administrations enhanced power of center and main source of revenue Centralization of power and deconcentration of structures	Increase local participation in governance Means to fight corruption in state structures Promote social equity	Federal system with states (36) and municipalities (774) Revenue Sharing States and Local Government involved in education, health and welfare provision Federal control of national policy	Partial devolution – more administrative deconcentration Existence of a variety of local government structures for mobilizing resources Increasing conflict between local government and state government Some duplication of services

Substantial decentralization efforts in Nigeria in the1980s and early 1990s were weakened by the absence of viable local political processes to convey information to the public about government decisions, to organize publics to be attentive to government actions, to mobilize public opinion regarding local government, and to hold local officials accountable for their performance (Wunsch, 1995). The education decentralization process is fraught with a number of problems with a major issue being relations between different levels and structures (World Bank 1999). Since Education Secretaries are responsible to State Primary Education Boards (SPEBs), rather than to the local councils, which appoint them, tensions have surfaced between the Local Government Authority (LGA) and SPEBs. SPEBs have also taken over a number of roles (e.g. for supplies and maintenance) originally envisaged as the responsibility of Local Government. Hence there is some perception on the part of the local government that they are not meaningfully involved in the management of the schools and in the resources made available for their areas. World Bank Consultation in the Nigeria Primary Education Project (1999) found that at school level there is a varying, but generally high, level of involvement in

local primary schools by groups such as PTAs, school committees, community-based organizations (CBOs), and individual community members. Such local actors make a substantial contribution to their schools through the construction of school buildings, repairs and maintenance, and the provision of furniture and instructional materials. Many communities also participate in promoting the enrollment and attendance of pupils, and have an input, although limited, into the management of schools. However, PTAs, school councils and CBOs are faced with multiple and frequently overwhelming demands, and their role vis à vis other stakeholders in the management of primary education is not well-defined.

Tanzania

The United Republic of Tanzania comprises two former sovereign states, Tanganyika (currently Tanzania Mainland) and Zanzibar, which merged in 1964. One-party rule came to an end in 1995 with the first democratic elections held since the 1970s. Tanzania has experienced considerable strife since independence, and its economy is extremely weak. It is heavily dependent on agriculture, which accounts for 57% of GDP, provides 85% of exports, and employs 90% of the work force. Tanzania has one of the lowest secondary education enrollment rates in the world (48%).

The Education Act No. 25 of 1978 (amended in 1995), which is the basic legal document governing the provision of education in Tanzania stipulates the roles and powers of different actors in education including the Ministry, the Commissioner, Local Authorities (103 district councils on mainland Tanzania), and owners and managers of private institutions. The Local Government Council Acts of 1982 and 1986 reaffirm local government (district council) responsibility over primary education. Half of all district council funds, most of which are provided by the central government, are spent on discharging this responsibility (Terkildsen, 1998). Responding to changing educational needs and pressures the Basic Education Master Plan (BEMP) was developed by the central government to guide the provision of basic education. The action plan involved the transfer of responsibility to local school committees, representing parents, to oversee the running of the school. Regional administration and local government has been restructured. Small Regional Secretariats have replaced regional development directorates, which duplicated the functions and responsibilities of the local government authorities. New arrangements provide for decentralized management of staff and finances by local government authorities. An important intervention in governance has been the strengthening of democracy at the grassroots level through the establishment of mitaa (neighborhood) committees in the urban councils' areas of jurisdiction (Ngwilizi, 2001).

Therkildsen's study of selected rural districts found that there is more progress in terms of structures and a framework than in practice in education decentralization. Local level education politics are dominated by various constellations of individuals from the political elite among council staff and politicians, the parties, the central government, and businessmen. Local governments or school committees have little influence on curriculum and examinations, the weight given to academic and extra-curricular activities or the length of classroom instruction (Therkilsen, 1998). He concludes that the national political goal to provide the same education for all has suppressed the need to adjust primary education to significant variations in local conditions. For example, earlier permission for local authorities to adjust school terms to local agricultural practices has been withdrawn. Ministry of Education control of primary education is

so strong that district councils do not have access to the ministry's school inspection reports, although these contain information on the performance of teachers, schools, and pupils.

Figure Eight: Status of Education Decentralization in Tanzania

Environment and Context	*Rationale*	*Form of Decentralization*	*Outcomes*
New vision focusing on national issues and programs conducive to the operation of a market economy	Local development more effectively managed by institution closer to the people Ensures that development is effectively planned and controlled Efficiency and effectiveness	Two-layered system of urba and rural authorities (1984) Strengthening of local government (1996-2000) Property, fuel and minor taxes local level Local government responsible for primary schools, health, and planning	Mostly deconcentration of administrative functions National standards set for local service delivery Local government authorities manage staff and finances Mitaa (or neighborhood committees) have resulted in creased local participation in urban councils

Tanzania's educational decentralization has had contradictory effects. Evidence demonstrates that citizen participation has increased in line with the national goal of greater democratization But it also shows that the few parents already actively engaged in securing better education for their children do so as individuals, and there is less evidence of collective action by parents to increase the quality of and access to the local school for all children in the community (Therkildsen, 1998). Also decentralization initiatives appear to work against national equalization policies and exacerbate regional differences. Tensions between centralized planning and local autonomy are likely to continue as the formal structure of the educational system still locates decision-making power at the center (Samoff, 1990).

Uganda

Uganda, which achieved independence from Britain in 1962, has experienced much violence and loss of life, with a death toll of approximately one million (Katarobo, 1995). Uganda's population is estimated at 3,985,712. Uganda has substantial natural resources, including sizable mineral deposits of copper and cobalt. Agriculture is the most important sector of the economy, employing over 80% of the workforce. Urgent problems include lack of adequate education provision, poor health, and high population growth. While the majority of children enter primary school, secondary school enrollment is at 13% overall and 7% for girls due largely to high fees and poor learning conditions (World Bank, 1994).

The 1997 Local Governments the Act provides for five levels of local government: village, parish, sub-county, county and district. District (45) and sub-county levels (800) have

political authority and significant resources. The District Councils have "autonomy" over primary and secondary education, primary health services, and basic services in water provision, roads, planning, and licensing. Primary education, community-based health services, hygiene, and low-level health units, are to be also devolved by districts to lower-level councils (Azfar et al, 2000). These policies have resulted the de-linking of 26 vertically organized departments at the district level from their respective ministries, and the creation of a local government administration. Decentralization in education revolves around the introduction of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program.

Figure Nine: Status of Education Decentralization in Uganda

Environment and	*Rationale*	*Form of*	*Outcomes*
Political and economic turmoil in 70s created a strong need to rehabilitate all aspects of Uganda Strong legal framework support decentralization introduced	Reduce workload of central officials Improve accountability and effectiveness Develop organizational structures suited to local circumstances Improve service delivery	Districts (43), counties (150) and sub-counties Unconditional and equalization grants Districts responsible for education, health, and basic urban services	Some devolution of administrative and political decision-making Centralized districts with direct link to the central administration Higher levels of government pushing resource burdens to lower levels

Decentralization may be creating strongly centralized districts, with a direct link to the central administration, which lack a meaningful fiscal base and primarily oversee what happens in sub-counties (Azfar et al, 2000). The funding base (central and donor grant money) for sub-county-level activities is uncertain, and highly inflexible, and the local tax base is small. Planning and budgeting processes intensify the top-down character of the system, as does the tendency of higher levels of government (e.g. districts) to economize on their own resources by pushing burdens on to lower levels (e.g. sub-counties). Under the Local Government Act of 1997, all schools fall under the administration and management of District Councils. Decentralization has brought the schools closer to the administrative units above them and therefore potentially could be more responsive. Each district has the authority to formulate, approve, and execute its own development plan. For example, registration for UPE children, distribution of textbooks and monthly remittances for schools from central government are all channeled through the District Administration offices (Onyach-Olaa, 2000). Education decentralization efforts have had mixed effects thus far. UPE has improved resource flows and has had the desired effect of significantly increasing enrollments (Azfar et al, 2000). It has enabled hard-pressed schools to access alternative sources of support, including informal contributions from pupils and families, and mobilized local support to maintain service

providers. Through the interventions of Parent Teacher Associations some schools have even been able to pay teachers (Munene, 1995). However, there continues to be serious governance problems. Central funding for devolved functions encourages abuses such as misreporting needs and funding criteria, and diversion of resources (Azfar et al, 2000).

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe gained independence in April 1980, after the Lancaster House agreements with Britain, ended 15 years of unilaterally declared independence by the white-minority Government of Rhodesia. Zimbabwe's economy relies heavily on agricultural crops such as tobacco, cotton, and sugarcane, and on related manufacturing industries including textiles and sugar production. The estimated population is 11,365,366 (World Factbook, 2001). Zimbabwe had made impressive strides in human development since independence, with literacy, child mortality and life expectancy rates well above regional averages. For the past decade, however, it has been grappling with fiscal problems; inequities in land distribution, poverty and rising unemployment; and increasing political strife (World Bank, 2000). After independence, education reforms focused on integration of the two racially separate education systems and diverting resources to rural schools from former white and urban black schools. When changes in the system were not forthcoming the government decided on infrastructure-oriented decentralization of education (SARA, 1997).

Figure Ten: Status of Education Decentralization in Zimbabwe

Environment and	*Rationale*	*Form of*	*Outcomes*
Commitment to decentralization and participation On-going restructuring of local government	Reduce costs Increase local partnerships in provision of social services	Provinces (8) and districts (57) Revenue from property, vehicle and, poll taxes Districts responsible for education, health, and basic urban services	Partial devolution– mostly deconcentration of some administrative functions Local authorities ineffective because of lack of resources Little effective power decentralized to development committees or to local authorities

Education in Zimbabwe is under the control of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, which is responsible for early childhood education and care, and primary and secondary education. In the first phase of decentralization central government, functions were to be decentralized to a hierarchy of provincial, district and local development committees, comprising elected and appointed officials. Regional Education Offices are expected to assume autonomous power although major decisions remains with the central ministry. Regions are subdivided into Education Districts—with the exception of the Harare region, which is almost urban—headed by

an Education Officer. Since the 1990s the focus has been on empowering elected local authorities with a more recent push for local authorities to retain school fees and run schools (Paradza, 2000). Decentralization of primary education has involved the delegation of certain functions to School Development Committees (SDCs), composed of community members, the principal and one member of staff who are ex-officio members (Conyers, 2000).

Decentralization of primary education, rural water supplies, social welfare, and wildlife management has occurred in a piecemeal fashion. There has been a major gap between rhetoric and reality in implementing decentralization policies with functions being decentralized without the financial resources required to execute them effectively. Conyers (2000) study of the Binga Rural District, as in other parts of the country, suggests that little effective power has been decentralized, to development committees or to local authorities - the basic obstacle being the reluctance of central institutions to relinquish power. The country's deteriorating economic position and increasing political tension has aggravated the situation. Local authorities have insufficient revenue sources of their own and, the central government has been unable either to give them additional revenue raising powers or provide sufficient financial transfers to enable them to perform the functions effectively. Education decentralization measures have resulted in more community involvement in and local control over the running of primary schools but there have been many problems as well. Problems include: SDC members not sufficiently prepared for taking on the responsibilities and/or fully aware of either their powers or responsibilities; communities are very poor and unable to make significant financial contributions; community interest and involvement is generally low; head teachers or other council members abusing their powers; and confusion over the role of the SDC (Conyers, 2000).

Issues and Lessons

Education decentralization in SSA is extraordinarily complex involving assumptions around form and levels of decentralization, functions, and outcomes[10]. Decentralization is uneven, and implementation varies according to countries even where similar themes are identifiable. However, the trend towards similar policies does suggest that there are common broader changes occurring. Experience with education decentralization in almost all of these countries reveals a deep and on-going tension between downwards (government to communities) and upwards (the inverse) articulations and responsibilities. In reviewing what is a limited number of studies[11] of education decentralization programs it is still possible to identify some common theoretical assumptions, mechanisms employed, and outcomes.

Aims and Assumptions

Analyses of decentralization policies and programs in Sub-Saharan Africa are complicated by confusion over the form of decentralization and contradictory aims. Added complications arise because most decentralization efforts involve ideological considerations, which are often not explicit. Despite this confusion it is obviously important to understand what is being aimed at in decentralization, as espoused and in use. This review indicates that the trend

[10] A summary of the six cases is provided in Figure Eleven.

[11] While, the references list provides an extensive number of sources consulted to compile this review, Appendix Two provides a streamlined list of studies focusing on the education decentralization initiatives on which most of the tentative conclusions are drawn.

toward decentralization originates in a number of different motives, and the relative weight of particular motives in influencing policy choices varies substantially across countries.

Education decentralization in this region appears to be often embedded in larger decentralization and political reforms taking place in the country, and is driven by many motives (often informal and/or hidden), such as: reducing national budgets by transferring educational costs to sub-national units (Ghana, Mali), strengthening policy control at the national level under the guise of decentralization (Zimbabwe), establishing democratic roots after long periods of autocratic government or political turbulence (Nigeria), and targeting national economic development (Tanzania and Uganda). In Many African countries attempts to decentralize authority and responsibility in the educational system originates in the incapacity of the central state to provide educational services of acceptable quality (Plank and Sykes, 1998). However, from this review, although improving the quality of education was often a goal, it was rarely the principal goal in practice.

The distinction between economic (administrative) and political (governance) aims is helpful in making sense of the disparate aims. Where economic/administrative aims are central (e.g. in Tanzania and Zimbabwe) deconcentration with little relinquishing of central authority is apparent. Where the political motive is primary, a common goal for decentralization (e.g. in Ghana and Uganda) there tends to be a break from a strong, "central" location of power, and greater devolution of power and resources to sub-national levels of government and local communities. However, the primary reasons for decentralization are often both political, a means to attain greater political legitimacy, and economic, a response to financial constraints that these states face. It is clear from this review and others (Azfar et al, 1999; Brosio, 2000; Manor, 1997; SARA, 1997) that certain central assumptions behind the economic/administrative and political/governance motives for decentralization, are often quite problematic and don't take into account contextual realities. There is often a blind faith and belief in a causal link between decentralization and better economic performance and democratization.

In all six cases there attempts are being made to establish institutional arrangements that allow for local participation in the education sector. However what local participation means, and whether it relates to sub-national units of governments or grassroots communities, is often not clear. The question arises whether decentralization, that is largely government initiated, can really empower the local structures and communities. From these cases, while the evidence is not conclusive, initial indications are that decentralization creates intermediate levels of power which are accountable not to the grassroots they are supposed to serve but to the central authority or their own institutional interests. In general the location of power has not really shifted from the center to the periphery but has reinforced the central control of the periphery.

Participation, Devolution of Power and Deconcentration

Closely allied to the issue of defining participation and democratization is the need to distinguish between devolution and deconcentration in describing patterns of decentralization (Wunesh, 1995). Devolution (the distribution of authority to make decisions and to take action by local governments or local communities independently of central administrative oversight) appears to occur less frequently than deconcentration (where local entities act largely as the local agents of central governments, manage personnel, and expend resources allocated to them by central government authorities). This distinction is clear with greater deconcentration in Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zimbabwe and more devolution in Uganda and Mali.

The changing and complex role of the state in education is crucially linked to decentralization. In this context a formulation of state power with an emphasis on a weak state and faith in markets coheres with an emphasis on the strong state and a commitment to regulating knowledge and values. While the state appears to be devolving power to individuals and autonomous local institutions the state remains strong in key areas. In fact, more not less power is consolidated within administrative units (Apple, 1999). This review indicates that intense state control of some functions is often coupled with greater decentralization of other aspects and contradictions are common.

Even in cases where it is acknowledged that the primary mode of decentralization is administrative and the devolution of power is largely rhetorical, the center continues to play a significant role both in policy setting and in carrying out routine functions. In all of the countries strong central regulation of education remains. Key responsibilities in governance, management, finance, and curriculum at regional, community, and school levels continue to be defined by national ministries of education. Sometimes this is done in partnership with local authorities but more than not often it unilateral. National guidelines continue to be an important mechanism in translating state policy into local reality and defining how schools are run. Much of the transfer of responsibilities in the context of education decentralization to local government units or to local communities appears to be limited to how they can generate more revenues to support schools. The irony is that the center often still retains power over how revenues generated at the local level are managed and spent.

Similarly, when participation and accountability are asserted in decentralization policies and programs, one must question whose participation the architects of the program had in mind and for whose benefit is the accountability. In Ghana, for example, the main objective of increasing participation was to strengthen the hand of national and local political and bureaucratic elites, and to improve central administration (Ayee, 1994). Often, then decentralization advanced for its instrumental administrative value may actually be for political consolidation at the center. In such cases it serves as a rhetorical mechanism to manage conflict and provide "compensatory legitimization". The center is able to purchase state legitimacy and maintain power through participation at the expense of reform and change (Weiler 1983).

Capacity and Efficiency

Insufficient capacity to carry out tasks associated with the provision of public services, including education, is a major consideration in deciding on decentralization in developing contexts. The delivery of public services requires administrative and technical skills that are generally in short supply in many developing countries. In all of the cases reviewed decentralization efforts whether it involved deconcentration to sub-national units or devolution of power to local communities were motivated by and affected by the capacity to discharge responsibilities at the local level.

In addition to the basic practical and technical problems relating to lack of capacity and resources that inhibit the realization of the grand expectations of decentralization, there is a basic problem with the efficiency argument that is borne out by the experiences of these countries with education decentralization. Efficiency as the underlying rationale for decentralized provision of public services, including education is not always justifiable because significant diseconomies of scale may result in higher unit costs for public services under decentralized arrangements; and spillover costs or benefits may mean that locally derived outcomes are not efficient from a broader, national perspective.

Rhetoric of Educational Motives

While improvement in teaching/learning processes is always desirable, it is not generally the primary objective of most decentralization initiatives. Political and economic objectives such as: transferring costs from the national to regional budgets, bringing stability to divided regions, and addressing demands for local autonomy drive the reform rather than educational considerations per se. Yet there is always the hopeful expectation of clear and conclusive information about the positive impact of educational decentralization at the classroom level. A common argument for education decentralization is that local decision-makers (school personnel or education officials) are likely to be more accountable to clients (parents), more responsive to local needs, and provide better quality education than the central authorities. However, there is little reason to believe (and evidence from these six cases confirm this) that educational decentralization necessarily improves the situation. It is difficult to establish direct cause (decentralization) and effect (test scores) relationships. And, even if it were possible to do so they are of questionable validity because of the host of intervening variables, such as teacher training, parent support, availability of resources, student and teacher motivation, and peer group pressure (Hanson, 2000). Furthermore, it would appear (in these cases at least) that education decentralization hardly touches key management issues relating to the organization of instruction, planning of programs, course content, and personnel management.

However, despite all the problems associated with decentralization, decentralization in education does have some potential benefits. Review of the experiences with educational decentralization in some of these countries at least (Uganda, Tanzania and Mali) suggest that communities are capable of increased involvement in educational management issues at the school level and improvements in the school environment. However, key elements are needed in to achieve desired outcomes. These include: community-level capacity building; building partnerships between community stakeholders and local educational authorities; an institutional framework for the delivery of education based on empowering communities to participate in of educational management; sufficient de-concentrated administrative and local government functions; allocation of public funding for use by local communities; and involvement of existing structures of educational management (Markov and Nellemann 2001). Education decentralization efforts are not likely to have the desired effects if the chief motivation remains cost reduction and a shifting of the financial burden from the center to under-resourced local communities.

General Lessons

In summary, *general lessons* about decentralization from this review include:

- Stated reasons do not always reflect the real underlying rationales for decentralization. Improving quality inputs or outcomes is not a common explicit rational e for education decentralization. Education decentralization publicly advocated as a means of improved service delivery and local empowerment, may actually be motivated by cost reduction or increasing political control.
- There is much discrepancy between what is claimed in terms of education decentralization and what is practiced.
- Core education decisions around curriculum and day-to-day school management and organization issues are hardly ever decentralized in such as a way to encourage local community participation in decsion-making.

- Macro-level economic and political contexts influence the implementation and outcomes of decentralization. Decentralization is a political process, which is introduced when it is politically expedient to do so and in a form, which suits particular political objectives. The level and pace of decentralization is affected by political will and commitment of various stakeholders. Devolution of authority local communities cannot succeed unless all stakeholders internalize the objectives, benefits and the responsibilities involved.
- All decentralization initiatives arouse a certain degree of conflict. However, decentralization reforms, which involve changes in the distribution of power, authority, and resources are likely to meet greater resistance and contestation than those which seek to reassign administrative responsibilities alone.
- Decentralization does not automatically reduce concentration of power at the center. Some centralized systems are merely transformed into systems of supervised or centralized decentralization in which the central government is omnipresent and has the final authority on important issues as well as day-to-day administration. Devolution of power to lower levels of government or local communities and democratization may be more rhetoric than reality.
- Problems in decentralization are a part of the 'learning process', which is inherent in any development initiative. An appropriate organizational structure, capacity, and resources to implement policies and programs are necessary.
- Many countries have embarked on decentralization in the belief decentralize that it will lead to greater local participation, and benefit local communities especially the poor or marginalized. However, this is not necessarily the case and depends on the emphasis central and local governments place on redistribution, the system of inter-governmental finance, and the extent of local participation in decision-making.

Conclusion

Decentralization policies have significant repercussions on resource mobilization and allocation, economic stability, service delivery, and equity (Litvack et al, 1998). The effects of changes in political and administrative organization, although quite variable, are rarely neutral: they advance the interests of some groups over others, alter patterns of resource allocation, change the distribution of income and wealth, and increase or restrict citizens access to policy-makers and decision-making (Rondinelli and Cheema, 1983). Furthermore, no matter how benign the aims of decentralization are, the effects the may be quite adverse - vested interests and the non-poor may easily capture policies targeted to the poor (Brosio, 2000).
Decentralization often reflects a paradoxical neo-liberalism formulation of state power in which an emphasis on a weak state and faith in markets coheres with an emphasis on the strong state and a commitment to regulating knowledge and values. While the state appears to be devolving power to individuals and autonomous local institutions, the state remains strong in key areas. In fact more, not less, power is consolidated within administrative units rather than among parents (Apple, 1999).

From this review it appears that the linkage between decentralization and its supposed benefit is usually an a priori rationalization based on plausibility. Such evidence as there is (in these six cases, and more generally), suggests that education decentralization has not necessarily led to better governance or greater efficiency in resource allocation or service delivery. While

much country-specific empirical work needs to be done to assess the merits of educational decentralization, in general there are some indications that where institutional capacity is weak, where democratic institutions are fragile and resources are scarce, caution is needed in promoting decentralization. Efforts to decentralize the provision, management and control of education systems need to build on processes that are familiar, and involve a combination of administrative, political, and fiscal changes. A mix of political will (policy makers working together with stakeholders), technical inputs (competent policies and personnel in education) and economic factors (adequate resources) is essential. At the same time, there has to be congruency between "bottom-up" and "top-down" principles, emphasizing knowledge, rights, and power of local communities while taking into account context and constraints.

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[12] The references used in this paper are organized under three different lists. First is presented all general references that inform much of section one, then a list of references by country and region that was used in developing the country profiles and an understanding of decentralization in this region. Finally a list of more streamlined references of the specific education decentralization studies in this region in selected timeframes for each of the six countries is given in appendix two.

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Appendix One: Status of Decentralization in Selected Sub-Saharan African Countries

Country	Environment and Context	Rationale	Form of Decentralization Level/ function of Implementation	Outcomes
Ghana	Some historical tradition of decentralization, focus on centralization in first 30 years of independence On-going decentralization since 1988	Shift locus of decision-making to local level as a means to democratize state institutions Cost reduction by cutting state expenditure Efficient use and allocation of resources	Regions (10) coordinate districts (110) District Assembly Common Fund Property, fuel and minor taxes, and fees at local level Districts responsible for urban services, primary education, and health	Mostly deconcentration of administrative authority with little decentralization of institutional decision-making authority Ministries continue to operate in a centralized way
Mali	Increasing social pressure for greater democratization	Increase political autonomy of state and local authorities Increase participation in local decision-making structures Means to fight corruption in government and provision of services Promote equity	Multi-layered system with regions (8), circles (46), and municipalities (701). Business and other minor taxes Circles and Regions responsible for infrastructure Municipalities in charge of urban services	Some devolution of power over administrative and political decisions New levels of government have provided a channel for local participation Tension between traditional authorities and members of regional and local government structures
Nigeria	Previous military administrations enhanced power of center and main source of revenue Centralization of power and deconcentration of structures	Increase local participation in governance Means to fight corruption in state structures Promote social equity	Federal system with states (36) and municipalities (774) Revenue Sharing States and Local Government involved in education, health and welfare provision Federal control of national policy	Partial devolution – more administrative deconcentration Existence of a variety of local government structures for mobilizing resources Increasing conflict between local government and state government Some duplication of services
Tanzania	New vision focusing on national issues and programs conducive to the operation of a market economy	Local development more effectively managed by institutions closer to the people Ensures that development is effectively planned and controlled Efficiency and effectiveness	Two-layered system of urban and rural authorities (1984)/ Strengthening of local government (1996-2000) Property, fuel and minor taxes local level Local government responsible for primary schools, health, and planning	Mostly deconcentration of administrative functions National standards set for local service delivery Local government authorities manage staff and finances Mitaa (or neighborhood committees) have resulted in creased local participation in urban councils
Uganda	Political and economic turmoil in 70s created a strong need to rehabilitate all aspects of Uganda Strong legal framework support decentralization introduced	Reduce workload of central officials Improve accountability and effectiveness Develop organizational structures suited to local circumstances Improve service delivery	Districts (43), counties (150) and sub-counties Unconditional and equalization grants Districts responsible for education, health, and basic urban services	Some devolution of administrative and political decision-making Centralized districts with direct link to the central administration Higher levels of government pushing resource burdens to lower levels
Zimbabwe	Commitment to decentralization and participation On-going restructuring of local government	Reduce costs Increase local partnerships in provision of social services	Provinces (8) and districts (57) Revenue from property, vehicle and, poll taxes Districts responsible for education, health, and basic urban services	Partial devolution– mostly deconcentration of some administrative functions Local authorities ineffective because of lack of resources Little effective power decentralized to development committees or to local authorities

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Appendix Two: Status of Education Decentralization in Selected Sub-Saharan African Countries

Country	Context, Policies and Plans	Motives	Outcomes
Ghana 1992- 2000 Revised in 1997	Government wide decentralization plan introduced in 1988 includes the strengthening of 110 Education District Offices District and Area Committees are expected to stimulate community interest in schools	Cost reduction for central government is the primary aim of decentralization initiatives. Communities, churches, and district assemblies are expected to help reduce the financial burden on the center by contributing revenues to meet costs. Democratization, community participation and greater accountability at school level are also seen as a benefit of the process	District Education Offices have responsibility for school management, supervision, budgeting, and data collection and analysis for schools within their district Communities and District Assemblies are beginning to contribute to school revenues Most other functions still controlled by central ministry Churches, chiefs and Parent Committees are playing a bigger role in schools Regional disparities in education provision have not improved
Mali 1993 -2000	Ministry of National Education and National Council for Education to ensure local interests and conditions are taken into account in recreating Mali's education system as part of the Decade of Development in Education Initiative	A key motive is to increase the number and quality of schools through greater community involvement in governance and through financial contributions at school level	Communes responsible for primary schools and secondary schools controlled by Cercles Extent of community involvement varies – rural and urban associations involved in the running of some schools; functions include recruitment and payment of teachers, and school construction and maintenance Increased political contestation at school level Greater financial contributions are being made especially in Islamic schools
Nigeria 1993 - Revised 2000	Federal Ministry and National Council for education oversee decentralization and management of education Universal Primary Education Programme introduced as part of the administrative decentralization aimed at strengthening Nigeria's federal structure	Decentralization in education seen as a means of increasing performance and accountability at school level through community participation and devolution of fiscal responsibility	National Primary Education Commission ensures that education functions shared between federal structures and state and local governments. State Primary Education Boards oversee Education Secretaries resulting in tension with Local Government Authority which is also supposed to have jurisdiction over education services PTAs, school committees, and community-based organizations contribute to school construction and maintenance, and instructional materials Limited community influence on school management

Appendix Two continued: Status of Education Decentralization in Selected Sub-Saharan African Countries

Country	Context, Policies and Plans	Motives	Outcomes
Tanzania 1996 - 2000	Recent Local Government Reform has focused on the role of local authorities to provide services, including primary education to address community needs and local participation. Part of a larger effort to privatize some services and allow for private provision of secondary education	Decentralization in education is aimed at reducing government's role as the sole provider of educational services, increasing the private sector's role in educational development, and community participation and ownership	Number of structures introduced but little effect on community involvement level District council main structure involved in education at local level but Ministry of Education remains in control School Committees appear to have little influence on curriculum, examinations, and other academic matters
Uganda 1997 -2001	Reconstruction of education system in the context of empowering local governments. Five Year Education Plan and the Universal Primary Education Plan means to decentralize educational administration and planning	Education decentralization is expected to give local government structures and local communities greater power in the running of schools. Decentralization is expected to improve accountability and increase resources for schools from the local communities.	District Councils are responsible for management of schools. Decentralization has generated improved resources for schools and increased enrollments Parent Teacher Associations have been able to secure funds to pay teachers Central funding for schools continues to encourage misreporting of needs and diversion of resources
Zimbabwe 1998 -2000	Wider decentralization aimed at strengthening local government. Education decentralization located within attempts to ensure equity in provision of educational services to black and white students, and urban and rural areas. Empowering Regional Education Offices to make decisions together with Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture	Decentralization of education is expected to mobilize community resources for the support of education, and increase cost-effectiveness and efficiency of the system ensuring better utilization of available resources	School Development Committees composed of community members, principal and one teacher as ex officio members established. Devolution of responsibility for the construction and maintenance of school buildings, provision of equipment, determination and collection of 'development levy' to meet maintenance and other costs not covered by the basic government grant, and the hiring of teachers. There is greater community involvement in running of primary schools. Greater financial burden on parents

Appendix Three: Specific Country Studies Used to Review Progress of Education Decentralization

Country	Study
Ghana	D.K. Agyeman, J.J.K. Baku, R. Gbadamosi assisted by E. Addabor, K. Adoo-Adeku, M. Cudjoe, A.A. Essuman, E.E.K. Gala and C. (2000). Pomary Review of Education Sector Analysis in Ghana 1987-1998. Working Group on Education Sector Analysis. Paris:UNESCO. Assibey-Mensah, George O. (2000) Decentralization on trial: The case of Ghana's district assemblies. *Western Journal of Black Studies*, 24(1). Joseph R.A. Ayee, and Ferdinand D. Tay (1998). A Decade Of Decentralization Reforms In Ghana, 1988-1998. Paper presented at the Project Workshop on "Policies and Practices Supporting Sustainable Development in Sub-Saharan Africa" organized by the Scandinavian Seminar College at the Golf Hotel, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire on November 9-11, 1998. http://www.cdr.dk/sscafrica/ay&ta-gh.htm Aye, Joseph R.A. (1994). An anatomy of public policy implementation: The case of decentralization policies in Ghana. Aldershot, England: Avebury. Maynes, Bill and Joseph Mankoe (1994). Decentralization of educational decision making in Ghana. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 14 (1).
Nigeria	Paul A. Francis with S.P.I. Agi, S. Ogoh Alubo, Hawa A. Biu, A.G. Daramola, Uchenna M. Nzewi, and D.J. Shehu. (1998) Hard Lessons: Primary Schools, Community and Social Capital in Nigeria, Technical Paper No. 420, October, 1998, World Bank, Washington, D.C. Hinchliffe, Keith (1989). Federation and educational finance. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 9 (3). Dele Olowu, Eloho Otobo & M. Okotoni (1997). The Role of the Civil Service in Enhancing Development and Democracy: An Evaluation of the Nigerian Experience. Paper prepared for presentation at *Civil Service Systems in Comparative Perspective,* School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, April 5-8, 1997. World Bank (1999). Nigeria: Consultations for Improved Primary Education. No. 130. World Bank Africa Region. http://www.worldbank.org/afr/findings/english/find130.htm World Bank (1995). Findings: Africa Region No. 47 September 1995. Washington, DC: The World Bank. http://www.worldbank.org/afr/findings/english/find47.htm
Mali	Afribone Mali (1999). Le Mali. http://www.ml.afribone.net/en/Education/ Charlick, R. B. (2001). Popular Participation and Local Government Reform. Public Administration and Development, 21, pp. 149-157. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2001). Republic of Mali. http://www.ciesin.org/decentralization/English/CaseStudies/mali.html Hal Lippman and Barbara Lewis (1998), Democratic Decentralization in Mali CDIE Impact Evaluation, USAID. http://www.dec.org/pdf_docs/pnaca905.pdf Management Development and Governance Division, United Nations Development Programme (1998) Political & Popular Participation: Mali http://magnet.undp.org/Docs/dec/monograph/PopularPartic-MLI.htm Melly, P. (2000). Mali Forges Ahead with Good Governance. http://magnet.undp.org/dpa/choices/2000/march/pg10.htm USAID/Mali (2000). Democratic Governance Strategic Objective. http://www.usaid.gov/ml/bilateral_pgms/dg/dg_program/dg_program.htm
Tanzania	Andrei Markov and Soren Nellemann (2001) Tanzania: Community Education - World Bank Africa Group Findings April 2001 No. 180. http://www.worldbank.org/afr/findings/english/find180.htm Herme J. Mosha (1995). Primary Education Policies in Tanzania. Journal of the Faculty of Education, UDSM, 16. Hassan Ngwilizi, (2001). Decentralisation in Tanzania. A paper submitted to the UNCDF Conference on Decentralisation and Local Governance in Africa, Cape town, 26 - 30 March, 2001. http://www.uncdf.org/capetown/docs_statements/tanzania.html Ole Therkildsen (September 2000). Contextual issues in decentralization of primary education in Tanzania. International Journal of Educational Development, 20 (5). Ole Therkildsen (June 1998). Local Government and Households in Primary Education in Tanzania: Some lessons for Reform. CDR Working Paper 98.6. http://www.cdr.dk/working_papers/wp-98-6.htm

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Appendix Three continued: Specific Country Studies Used to Review Progress of Education Decentralization

Country	Study
Uganda	Omar Azfar, Satu Kähkönen*, Jeffrey Livingston, Patrick Meagher, Diana Rutherford (2000). An Empirical Investigation of Governance and Public Services in Uganda. IRIS Center, University Of Maryland, College Park and *World Bank http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/decentralization/Uganda%20paper%20121800.doc Flanary, Rachel (June 2000). Decentralism and Civil Society in Uganda: The quest for good governance. The Journal of Modern African Studies, 38(2). Garvey, Brian (1996). Education and the State in Uganda. Journal of Educational Administration and History, 28 (1). Katarobo, (1995). Introduction. In P. Langseth, J. Katarobo, E. Brett, and J. Munene (eds.) Uganda: Landmarks in building a nation. Kampala, Uganda: Fountain Publishers. Munene, J. C. (1995). Organization and Accountability in Health and Education. . In P. Langseth, J. Katarobo, E. Brett, and J. Munene (eds.) Uganda: Landmarks in building a nation. Kampala, Uganda: Fountain Publishers. Martin Onyach-Olaa (2000). Perspective of managing a National Programme and resolving the competing and conflicting interests: Experiences from the District Development Programme. http://www.uncdf.org/capetown/docs_statements/monyacholaa.html
Zimbabwe	Diana Conyers (2000) The Zimbabwean Experience: A Local Perspective http://www.uncdf.org/capetown/docs_statements/zimbabwe.html Frances Stewart, Jeni Klugman and A.H. Helmsing (1994). Decentralization In Zimbabwe - Occasional Paper 15. Human Development Report Office (HDRO). Paradza, G. (2000). Regional Decentralisation Case Studies: A Zimbabwean Experience. Paper used as background material for the 2000 World Development Report

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